

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1        1. A computer-implemented method for generating anonymous leads from  
2        anonymously submitted database search criteria, comprising:
  - 3            (a) generating a prospect having:
    - 4              (i) device-identifying information,
    - 5              (ii) prospect-identifying information, and
    - 6              (iii) search information corresponding to anonymously submitted  
7                search criteria;
  - 8            (b) providing prospect information to a business expert in a prospect  
9                presentation, wherein the prospect presentation is designed to enable  
10              generation of a proposal, and wherein the prospect information does not  
11              include the device-identifying information from the prospect; and
  - 12            (c) providing proposals to devices associated with prospects for which the  
13              proposals are generated.
- 1        2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the search  
2        information also corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.
- 1        3. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the prospect  
2        information relates to a plurality of prospects, all of which are active.
- 1        4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - 2            (a) notifying a business expert of a new prospect; and
  - 3            (b) tracking a status of a proposal.
- 1        5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the prospect also has  
2        gateway information if available, and wherein the prospect information provided to a  
3        specific business expert does not include data from prospects having particular gateway  
4        information if the specific business expert does not have an affiliation with the particular  
5        gateway.
- 1        6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the providing  
2        proposals step comprises:
  - 3            (a) receiving a request for a formatted set of data, wherein the request includes  
4                a device identifier;

5 (b) checking a status indicator to determine whether a proposal should be  
6 provided;  
7 (c) adding a proposal notification to the requested formatted set of data, if the  
8 checking step results in a determination that a proposal should be  
9 provided; and  
10 (d) sending the formatted set of data.

1 7. The computer-implemented method of claim 6, wherein the proposal  
2 notification provides a link to a proposal-viewer, which enables anonymous  
3 communication between the device user and the business expert.

1 8. The computer-implemented method of claim 7, wherein the status indicator is  
2 included in the request, and wherein the formatted set of data comprises a web page, the  
3 prospect presentation comprises one or more web pages, the proposal-viewer comprises  
4 one or more web pages, the device identifier comprises a cookie, the status indicator  
5 comprises a cookie, and the prospect comprises an XML data set.

1 9. A computer system for anonymously connecting business experts with  
2 consumers, comprising:

3 (a) a database for storing prospects having search information corresponding  
4 to anonymously submitted search criteria; and  
5 (b) a server engine coupled with a network and the database, the server engine  
6 being configured to:  
7 (i) receive requests including device-identifying information and  
8 anonymously submitted search criteria;  
9 (ii) generate the prospects;  
10 (iii) supply a business database with the anonymously submitted search  
11 criteria;  
12 (iv) provide anonymous leads derived from the prospects; and  
13 (v) furnish proposals directed to users of identified devices.

1 10. The computer system of claim 9, further comprising the business database.

1 11. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the search information also  
2 corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.

1 12. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the server engine is further

2 configured to not provide anonymous leads derived from particular prospects to particular  
3 business experts based upon gateway information for the particular prospects and  
4 gateway affiliation information for the particular business experts.

1        13. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the server engine is configured to  
2 furnish the proposals by selective use of session identifiers and device identifiers.

1        14. The computer system of claim 13, wherein the server engine is further  
2 configured to enable anonymous communication between proposal generators and  
3 proposal receivers.

1        15. The computer system of claim 13, wherein the business database contains data  
2 regarding real estate, and wherein the server engine comprises a web server, the session  
3 identifiers are session cookies, and the device identifiers are permanent cookies.

1        16. A computer readable medium having computer program instructions stored  
2 therein, the computer program instructions comprising instructions for:

- 3        (a) generating a prospect having:
  - 4            (i) device-identifying information,
  - 5            (ii) prospect-identifying information, and
  - 6            (iii) search information corresponding to anonymously submitted
  - 7            search criteria;
- 8        (b) providing prospect information to a business expert in a prospect
- 9            presentation, wherein the prospect presentation is designed to enable
- 10            generation of a proposal, and wherein the prospect information does not
- 11            include the device-identifying information from the prospect; and
- 12        (c) providing proposals to devices associated with prospects for which the
- 13            proposals are generated.

1        17. The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the search information  
2 also corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.

1        18. The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the prospect also has  
2 gateway information if available, the computer program instructions further comprising  
3 instructions for:

- 4        (a) checking for gateway information prior to executing the providing
- 5            prospect information instructions; and

6 (b) excluding specific business experts from receiving prospect information  
7 associated with a gateway if the specific business experts lack an  
8 association with the gateway.

1 19. The computer readable medium of claim 16, further comprising instructions  
2 for:

3 (a) receiving a request for a formatted set of data, wherein the request includes  
4 a device identifier;  
5 (b) checking a status indicator to determine whether a proposal should be  
6 provided;  
7 (c) adding a proposal notification to the requested formatted set of data, if the  
8 checking step results in a determination that a proposal should be  
9 provided; and  
10 (d) sending the formatted set of data.

1 20. The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the status indicator is  
2 included in the request, and wherein the formatted set of data comprises a web page, the  
3 prospect presentation comprises one or more web pages, the proposal-viewer comprises  
4 one or more web pages, the device identifier comprises a cookie, the status indicator  
5 comprises a cookie, and the prospect comprises an XML result set.

1 21. A computer-implemented method for anonymously connecting sales agents  
2 with consumers of housing, comprising:

3 (a) providing a software application designed to communicate with a database  
4 containing information regarding housing, wherein the software  
5 application is accessible via a computer network and enables searching of  
6 the database, whereby search criteria is stored in association with search-  
7 requestor information without a requirement of user registration; and  
8 (b) wherein the software application generates prospects from the search  
9 criteria for viewing, and the software application enables generation of  
10 search-requestor-directed proposals based upon the prospects without  
11 revealing contact information for the search-requestor.

1 22. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the software  
2 application further enables anonymous communication between a proposal-creator and a

3 proposal-receiver.

1           23. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the information  
2 regarding housing includes information regarding real estate for sale, information  
3 regarding factory-built homes, information regarding common interest developments, and  
4 information regarding apartments for rent.

1            24. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the software  
2 application comprises:

- 3 (a) a presentation layer;
- 4 (b) a middle layer, having business rule implementation objects,  
5 communications objects and database messaging objects; and
- 6 (c) a database.

1            25. The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein the database  
2 messaging objects include objects for translating XML data into a database-specific  
3 format.